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SIPDIS

FOR I/FW, B/G, IIP/G/NEA-SA, B/VOA/N (BANGLA SERVICE) STATE  
FOR SA/PAB, SA/PPD (LSCENSNY, SSTRYKER), SA/RA, INR/R/MR,  
AND PASS TO USAID FOR ANE/ASIA/SA/B (WJOHNSON)

CINCPAC FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR, J51 (MAJ TURNER), J45  
(MAJ NICHOLLS)

USARPAC FOR APOP-IM (MAJ HEDRICK)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [KPAO](#) [PREL](#) [ETRD](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [BG](#) [OCII](#)

SUBJECT: Media Reaction: U.K. Elections; Dhaka

Summary: Several newspapers commented on the Labour Party's victory in Britain. "Sangbad" says that Britain will think twice before participating in Iraq-like campaigns in future. "Bhorer Kagoj" worries with the rise of the racist British National Party. "Amar Desh" reports that the re-election of both Blair and Bush is not a good omen for Muslim nations. "News Today" suggests that the Labour government will have to recast its domestic and foreign policy to arrest their declining popularity.

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U.K. Elections

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"Labour Wins Third Term"

Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Sangbad"

editorially comments (5/8):

The victory of the Labour Party shows that so-called "New Labour" image continues. Although voters did not accept increasing tuition fees and reforms in the health sector, the Iraq issue surpassed all others. Nevertheless, the Labour Party won an absolute majority, showing that its rule will not end easily. However, the Parliament will not be able to ignore the message they received from voters. Tony Blair's authority over the party and government will be reduced greatly and it would not be surprising if he has to leave the post before the end of his tenure. Against the backdrop of Britain's mistake as an accomplice of the U.S. in the Iraq war, the government will think twice in the future. It will nevertheless maintain its special relationship with the U.S. We congratulate Tony Blair and his Labour party for their third victory in a row.

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"Blair's Historic Win"

Pro-opposition Bangla language newspaper "Bhorer Kagoj"

editorially comments (5/8):

The rise of the racist British National Party is a matter of concern. Although it did not win any seats in the elections, the fact that it received votes in most constituencies is a matter of concern not only for Britain but also for civil society all over the world. In spite of Labour's win, Tony Blair's leadership is facing challenges. We believe that his third term will reflect the knowledge he has gained from his experiences. We hope that Bangladesh's friendly relations with Britain will strengthen further under his leadership.

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"Tony Blair's Hatrick"

Independent Bangla language newspaper "Amar Desh"

editorially comments (5/8):

Tony Blair has himself said that the Labour Party lost some votes due to the Iraq war. The Labor Party lost some 40 seats where immigrants and Muslims voters were a determining factor.... The victory of Tony Blair and George Bush, the two leaders of the war against terror, will strongly influence global politics, which may not be beneficial to Third World nations, especially to Muslim countries.

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"Britons follow their American cousins"

Independent English language newspaper "News Today"

editorially comments (5/8):

Though British voters have replicated their American cousins' decision to continue with George W. Bush Jr., they have done so with a stinging rebuke for Tony Blair. While 2004 was an electoral improvement for Bush over 2000, Tony Blair returns to No.10 Downing Street for a historic third term with a greatly reduced majority in the House of Commons. The reason, as ex-Labour and now the lone Respect Party MP Galloway put it, "the people you killed and the lies you told have come back to haunt you." By giving the new Labour 100 fewer seats in the House of Commons than it previously occupied, British voters have not sung exactly Blair's song. The victory came with a stick.

There is no doubt that Tony Blair will go down in British history as one of the most popular Prime Ministers.... But his ganging up with Bush over Iraq didn't go down well with the British people. To justify the invasion, he had to

resort to a maze of deceptions, lies and half-truths. Unlike the Americans, who were excited by their President's heroics, the inheritors of Britain's long imperialist history saw in it a shocking lack of morality. They also didn't like their Prime Minister acting like an American poodle. So, the endorsement came with a reprimand. Conservatives have improved their position, but they still have a long way to go.

For Labour to stop this slide it will have to go back to the drawing board to recast both its domestic and external policies. No major shifts are expected, but there will be changes. Anyway, we congratulate Mr. Blair and wish him, his family and his party all the best.

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Chammas